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Aunt Lucy's Cabin

BY

JUNE KANKAKEE

proof

Mrs. E. R. Turner

THE

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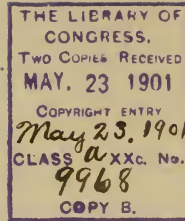
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FIRST SCENE.

Nice sitting room, containing small table, with table cover of royal purple, embroidered with gold-colored silk.

AUNT LUCY dressed in royal purple velvet, braided, or embroidered with gold-colored braid or silk; white silk lace on neck and sleeves; white, full-blown rose in hair on left side; white rose at throat, white satin slippers, and carrying white fan.

She is arranging a bouquet of flowers upon the table.

'After curtain rises, MACE ROGERS enters, dressed in cream-colored cashmere, trimmed with cream-colored silk lace, cream flowers in hair, cream-colored satin slippers.

AUNT LUCY'S CABIN

FIRST SCENE.

Nice sitting room, containing small table, with table cover of royal purple, embroidered with gold-colored silk.

AUNT LUCY dressed in royal purple velvet, braided, or embroidered with gold-colored braid or silk; white silk lace on neck and sleeves; white, full-blown rose in hair on left side; white rose at throat, white satin slippers, and carrying white fan.

She is arranging a bouquet of flowers upon the table.

After curtain rises, MACE ROGERS enters, dressed in cream-colored cashmere, trimmed with cream-colored silk lace, cream flowers in hair, cream-colored satin slippers.

MACE: How do you do, Aunt Lucy? This is the first time I have seen you since you were married.

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AUNT LUCY (*offering a chair*): I am quite well. Have a seat in this rocker. I am glad you came in, Mace.

MACE: This is new business for you, arranging bouquets; you used to buy them already arranged.

AUNT LUCY: I am very fond of working with flowers.

Enter MRS. SERENE, broad shoulders, stout body, good height and with full cheeks; dressed in brown flannel, brown bonnet, and coarse leather shoes, and without gloves.

MRS. SERENE (*in a jolly voice*): Well, how do you do, Mace? I hain't seen you in a long time.

MACE: I am well, thank you; this is my Aunt Lucy, Mrs. Serene.

AUNT LUCY *bows and offers a chair.*

MRS. SERENE (*addressing AUNT LUCY*): I seen you at church and liked your looks, and thought I would come and see you and let you know you had some neighbors.

AUNT LUCY: Thank you.

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MRS. SERENE (*addressing MACE*): I've been anxious to see you, Mace, to ask you about the school in your deestricht. Is the school took yet?

MACE: I do not know.

MRS. SERENE: My Huldā is going to be married in the spring, and I would like for her to teach that school, because they always pay big wages out there, and it will help to pay the wedding outfit. I have so much society expense; well, you know just how it is, every dollar helps.

MACE: Who is your daughter going to marry?

MRS. SERENE: Felix Stone; I suppose you all know him?

MACE: What! that Yankee peddler?

MRS. SERENE: Yes; he's been courting my Hulda a long time.

MACE: Is that so? Well, really, Felix Stone is considered quite a catch.

MRS. SERENE: Yes, he's quite high-toned.

Enter UNCLE LUTE, *a stylish-looking man,*

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dressed in the usual suit of black, black silk hat, black kid gloves, and carrying a cane with gold head.

AUNT LUCY (*smiling*): How do you do, Uncle Lute? Come in and be seated.

UNCLE LUTE bows to MRS. SERENE and MACE.

MRS. SERENE: I believe I used to know you.

UNCLE LUTE: Perhaps you did. I was in these parts years ago. This county looks to me as if there were many pleasant places in it to live.

AUNT LUCY: There are many beautiful homes in this county.

UNCLE LUTE: Have you a church in your town?

MRS. SERENE: Yes, sir; it's nigh unto three years sense the new church was finished. We have a new minister this year; his name is Mission.

UNCLE LUTE (*surprised*): I once knew a

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man by the name of Mission. I remember hearing he was licensed to preach. I wonder if he can be the same man?

MRS. SERENE: Very likely he is. He's had his license a long time, I know, for I heard him telling one day how many years he'd been married.

UNCLE LUTE (*smiling*): I have some nephews living in this county. I thought I would look after them and see how they are getting along. Do you know any persons living in this county by the names of Berne, Crete, Prince or Cedonia?

MRS. SERENE: Oh, yes, I know them well. They are very likely farmers, and very good people, too. There's Rush Cedonia; we've know'd him fur more than ten years, and a better man never wore a hat, nuther.

UNCLE LUTE: Have they grown children?

MRS. SERENE: Oh, yes, and they air mighty fine-looking children, too. Well, I must go home. I left light biscuits raising,

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and I'm expecting the minister and his wife to dinner.

(Exit.)

UNCLE LUTE (*addressing LUCY*): Is that Mrs. Serene that lived in these parts years ago?

AUNT LUCY: I think she is.

LUTE: I remember well of staying over night at their house years ago, when I was traveling this way. It was their daughter Florida's birthday. During the evening, when a number of us were seated in the sitting room, engaged in social conversation, some person proposed that Florida should receive fourteen kisses, because it was her fourteenth birthday. They were rather slow about kissing her, and it was proposed that I should begin. Sitting near her, I quietly imprinted a kiss upon her cheek, just as her mother opened the door and had full view of the performance. Shades of night! didn't she go for me?

LUCY: I suppose Mrs. Serene was angry?

UNCLE LUTE (*smiling*): Angry! I have

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not ventured to imprint a kiss upon any young lady's cheek since, in the absence of her mother.

MACE: Mrs. Serene is very outspoken, and does not spare a person's feelings when she is angry.

(*Exit.*)

UNCLE LUTE: Well, how do you like it upon the farm?

LUCY: I am delighted with farm life.

UNCLE LUTE: Is that so? I am glad to hear that. Living upon a farm is so different from what you were ever accustomed to, I was fearful you would be lonely and homesick.

AUNT LUCY: Not in the least. I think it is delightful here; such fresh, sweet air to breathe.

LUTE: Have you good neighbors?

AUNT LUCY: Oh, yes, and plenty of them.

LUTE: I am truly glad to find you enjoying yourself so much.

Enter LORENZO (dressed in business suit):
How do you do, Uncle Lute? (*Shake hands.*)

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LUTE: How do you do, Lorenzo?

LORENZO: I am truly glad to see you here. It is fortunate for me that you came now. I have been quite busy, but the seeding is all done now, and I am going to rest while the crops grow.

LUCY: And I will be excused, and have some dinner prepared for you.

LUTE: Thank you. I am sure I would enjoy a dinner with you and Lorenzo.

(Exit LUCY.)

UNCLE LUTE: Well, how are you and Lucy getting along in the farming business?

LORENZO: Really, I have no cause to complain. We are well suited so far. Crops are always good enough to suit me.

LUTE: That is good news, I am sure. Do you get half as much sleep as you did when you lived in the city?

LORENZO: I get more sleep since we have lived upon the farm.

LUTE: How is that?

LORENZO: We go to bed at nine o'clock,

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and get up at five in the morning. While in the city, we went to bed at eleven and twelve o'clock, and got up when we had to, which did not always give us enough sleep.

UNCLE LUTE: That is very true. Then you do not send your hired men out to work in the field at three o'clock in the morning?

LORENZO: No, sir; a six o'clock breakfast suits me; and after breakfast is time enough to begin work.

LUTE: Certainly it is; this rushing work upon a farm as many do is a great mistake.

(Thunder and lightning.)

MRS. SERENE *(coming in again)*: The clouds look as if it would rain before I could git home, so thought I would stop until the shower is over.

LORENZO: You must be making money, Mrs. Serene; you are making so many new and expensive improvements.

MRS. SERENE: Oh, no, we air just making a good, honest living.

LORENZO: It must have cost you a large

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sum of money to build and furnish such a house as you have?

MRS. SERENE: Oh, no, it didn't cost much; we know how to manage. I tell you we've done a heap of lifting, carrying, and selling sense we begun that house. I carried vegetables, beans and wheat many nights until midnight.

LUTE: That was rather hard work for a woman of your age.

MRS. SERENE: Yes, it was, but when I begin a piece of work I like to finish it.

(Thunder and lightning.)

(Enter FACULTY, with pieced bed-quilt folded, and carrying it under his arm): Well, sister Serene, I've found you at last. That bed-quilt society is in trouble about the quilting of this bed-quilt. *(Unfolds it.)* They sent it over for you to decide how this blazing star should be quilted.

MRS. SERENE: The ladies can quilt that blazing star just as they please. It's the plain block I have something to say about. That

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vine is beautiful, and I think it a right nice pattern to quilt by.

FACULTY: Yes, mammy, you've guessed it now. But what pattern will you have this blazing star quilted after?

MRS. SERENE: Well, our Hulda is a good hand about taste in needle-work. We will git her to decide it fur us.

FACULTY: All right, madam. (*Calls at one side.*) Hulda, come in and tell us how to quilt this bed-quilt.

(*Enter HULDA, stout-looking, dressed in an over-done, out-of-taste style.*)

HULDA (*after taking it in hand*): I should think double diamonds, the size when finished to be one-fourth of an inch in width, with two rows of stitching in a place, would be nice for the plain block.

MRS. SERENE: That would be just lovely.

FACULTY: That would be more tedious than your mother's vines. You might as well tell them to quilt it in the pattern of coiled snakes. It would be about as easy: Now

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bring on your bright ideas. How is this blazing star to be quilted?

HULDA: That should not be quilted; it looks better just as it is. It looks better away from home.

(Exit.)

FACULTY: Yes, yes, it sounds better away from home. That is what editors say when they put a few stretchers in their paper—it will sound better away from home. *(Tosses the quilt together.)*

(Thunder and lightning.)

LORENZO *(addressing FACULTY)*: Perhaps you could suggest a plan that would be easier?

FACULTY: I could, for a fact. In the first place, I would not have any quilting about it. I would have the pattern all butterflies, and five butterflies are enough for the whole quilt. Put one in the centre and one in each of the four corners *(smiling)*, and it will look better away from home. *(LORENZO and LUTE smile.)*

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MRS. SERENE: Your ideas air fine.

FACULTY: The important part is the binding, to keep the cotton bats from coming out. You will need two rows of stitching around the outside and the work is done.

LORENZO: That would be less work than quilting the whole quilt.

FACULTY (*smiling*): Yes, and would look better away from home.

(*Exit.*)

AUNT LUCY (*addressing LORENZO and LUTE*): Your dinner is ready.

(*Exit LORENZO, LUTE and LUCY.*)

(*Thunder and lightning, wind, rain and hail.*)

(*Enter FELIX STONE, very neatly dressed in business suit, carrying a case of dry goods in hand, smiling and bowing.*)

FELIX: I am lucky to make my escape out of that rainstorm, and find shelter in such a cosy place as this.

MRS. SERENE: You air just the man we want to see. The sewing society that I am a

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member of air having a quilting, and they've broke the biggest part of their needles, and air on their last spool of thread.

FELIX: In my business, I always carry a good supply of thread and needles.

MRS. SERENE: Let me have two papers of the best needles you have, and four spools of white thread, number twenty-four, I think will be about right.

FELIX (*opening his case*): Madam, the best needles I have are darning needles, and they are just what you want for that quilt. I've seen it. It's as thick as a feather bed. And you had better get some binding twine to quilt it with; that number twenty-four thread will be too fine.

MRS. SERENE: Now, Felix Stone, don't be joking about business affairs. Have you fine shoes with you to-day?

FELIX: No, madam. If I had there would not be any large enough for you. I have a fine assortment of ladies' hose.

MRS. SERENE: Have you rakes, too?

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FELIX (*smiling*): No, madam.

MRS. SERENE: Well, it's too late in the season to buy hoes; we have our hoeing all done; we might take a couple in the spring. My Hulda is grand with a hoe.

FELIX (*smiling*): Is that so?

MRS. SERENE (*earnestly*): Mr. Stone, is there anything invented to reduce the size of people's feet?

FELIX: Madam, I know of no way of reducing the size of your feet, unless you should have them pared on the outside, and it would take some time to pare them down to the size other people have.

MRS. SERENE (*sneeringly*): Ha!

FELIX (*smiling*): Well, for a summer shoe, you wear about number fourteen, do you not? (*Closes dry goods case.*)

MRS. SERENE: Now, Felix Stone, don't be making fun of my feet. That's why I always make my dresses so long—because my feet air so big.

FELIX: Excuse me, if you would make

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your dresses shorter and let the skirt hang even all around, you would not expose the size of your feet as much as you do to make them so long, and hold them up in places.

MRS. SERENE: I guess dressmakers know how to make dresses as well as you do.

FELIX: I guess they don't. No wise dressmaker will advise a woman, rich or poor, to make her dresses with a train that is to be worn upon the street. Trained dresses belong indoors and upon clean carpets.

MRS. SERENE: That is a matter of taste.

FELIX: That is a matter of sense.

MRS. SERENE: I guess you and me would not agree very well, anyhow.

FELIX: I guess we wouldn't, either.
(Picks up his case of dry goods and starts out, while MRS. SERENE stands quietly looking after him, while curtain falls.)

SECOND SCENE.

Room arranged without furniture. Enter ROXANNA DUNDAS, dressed in red and green changeable silk, with hat to match, fashionably made; dark green gloves. Begins taking off gloves. VINCENT enters on opposite side in quite a hurry a little later; dressed in a business suit with overalls on, carrying a bouquet of peonies, and hat in hand.

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VINCENT (*smiling*): Well, Roxanna, you did beat me, didn't you? I never was so glad in my life to see you. I tried to get around to help you off the train, but you dodged me someway. How did you turn that corner so quickly?

ROXY: Easy enough. I was angry. What did you come in that sort of style for? Those conductors all know me, and have ever since I was a little girl.

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VINCENT (*in a delighted manner*): Really, Roxy, I was so overjoyed, and so anxious about your coming, I forgot to take off my overalls. I brought you some pinies.

(*Offers them to her. She hits them with her hand and throws them upon the floor.*)

VINCENT: Why, Roxy!

ROXY (*angrily*): Why will you persist in calling those flowers pinies? Don't you know the correct name for them?

VINCENT (*in a good-natured way*): Yes, Roxy, I do know the correct name.

ROXY: Then why don't you call them by their right name?

VINCENT (*slowly*): Oh, I am old fashioned, you know. I first got into the habit by mocking your Uncle John, and it kind of stayed with me.

ROXY: Yes, it stayed with you as my turkey money stays with you. Who gave you permission to sell my turkeys?

VINCENT: Your turkeys? No person gave me permission to sell the turkeys. I was

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not aware the turkeys belonged to you, any more than they did to me.

ROXY: Have I not had the entire care of them?

VINCENT: Yes.

ROXY: Then what claim have you upon them?

VINCENT (*in a good-natured way*): Well, I set the hens, made the coops, and raised the grains you fed them.

ROXY: That is nothing by the side of the other work that has to be done to raise them.

VINCENT: Don't I try to help you all I can?

ROXY: No, you are the poorest help I ever saw.

VINCENT: Why, Roxy, I always try to help you when I can know what to do!

ROXY: I should think you were blind a greater part of the time.

VINCENT: Well, well, how women will talk when they get their heads set. Now look at those flowers; I paid two dollars for them,

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and never bought any that gave me so much pleasure, because I thought they would please you.

ROXY: You'll not be apt to wear your old overalls, the next time you come to meet me at the train.

VINCENT (*smiling*): I might not come to meet you next time.

ROXY: Well, I am tired of so much work; that is what makes me so cross; besides, I think the pocketbook should increase according to the size of the family.

VINCENT: Oh, that is the trouble, is it? I thought it was because I sold the turkeys.

ROXY (*pouting for an instant*): Well, there were three hundred turkeys at a dollar and a half apiece, and I suppose the money will go to pay for cows, horses and machinery, as usual.

VINCENT: Not necessarily that way.

ROXY: That is the way it always has gone, and I suppose this will go the same old road. If I could have that money, it would buy some

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new furniture, and renew our bedding and wardrobe. Our furniture looks as if it had been used a century. I get so tired looking at our old, faded things in the house. It seems to me if I had a pair of wings, how high I would fly, to get out of the sight of the inside of this house.

VINCENT (*in a pleasant tone*): Roxy, the first money that comes in you shall have to buy whatever you want with it.

ROXY: I do not see anything consoling about that. There will not be anything to sell for six months; by that time the expense will be equal to the income.

VINCENT: It takes capital to run a farm.

ROXY: You do not need to run all the capital into the barnyard.

VINCENT: You have a good living, don't you?

ROXY: Yes, but one-half of the time I am too tired to eat, after the victuals are cooked. What pleasure is there in living this way?

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VINCENT: You might have less pleasure if you had nothing to cook.

ROXY: Girls never better themselves by marrying farmers.

VINCENT: That is a great mistake, Roxy. Many farmers retire, and live at their ease.

ROXY: Perhaps the farmer does, but his wife will go on drudging away.

VINCENT: Ah, Roxy, don't get discouraged.

ROXY: Do you know any girls of our acquaintance that have bettered their situation by marrying farmers?

VINCENT: Yes, plenty of them.

ROXY: I should like to know where they are. Mention some of them.

VINCENT: There is Mrs.—Mrs.—why, there's Mrs.—well—oh, you have confused me so I cannot think of any person's name.

ROXY (*smiling*): No, I think not in that line. Well, I am hungry and would like some supper. (*Goes out.*)

VINCENT (*sadly picking up the flowers,*

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goes out): Well, this looks as if I had wasted my money.

Enter MR. CRETE, with uncombed hair, dressed with overshirt and overalls on, carrying about a peck of corn in a sack. He empties it out upon the floor, and begins separating the larger from the smaller.

Enter UNCLE LUTE, tall and fine-looking, dressed in black with long black robe on, long silver-gray hair and whiskers; hat or cap of ancient style, carrying a cane with gold head.

UNCLE LUTE (*bowing*): Preparing for planting corn, are you?

CRETE: Yes, sir.

LUTE: Fine weather you are having for farm work.

CRETE: Well, yes, I don't remember ever seeing finer spring weather than we are having just now. (*Stops his work and talks.*)

LUTE: You are getting your spring work done early in the season.

CRETE: I am obliged to get my work started early in the spring, or we could never

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get our work done; we have so awful much to be done.

LUTE: Are those your little boys that were plowing in that field out there yesterday?

CRETE: Yes, sir.

LUTE: Rather small to lift those heavy plows around, are they not?

CRETE: Oh, they do not mind it; they are stout little fellows.

LUTE: How about that little fellow in his bare feet? Do you think that will help to strengthen his body and mind when he is grown?

CRETE: Ah, that won't hurt him. Those little boys are as happy as the birds in the air.

LUTE: Wait awhile, sir; they may be as ugly as Satan in chains. I should think you would want them to be in school?

CRETE: I cannot spare them during the working season.

LUTE: What! You do not keep those little toddlers at work all summer, do you?

CRETE: I do. I am obliged to. There is

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no small expense in raising a large family of children, and while they are here, they might just as well help pay for their keeping.

LUTE: Ah! beware, when they are old enough to take care of themselves, and their poor old, feeble father, you will need to take care of them and yourself too. This constantly overworking the body is ruinous to the mind. The mind should be cultivated with the body.

CRETE: I calculate they shall have a chance to cultivate their minds when they are older.

LUTE: Yes, when it is too late. If you want your boys to be physically and mentally strong when they are grown, you do not want to put the work of men upon them when they are boys. How much land do you own here?

CRETE: Only six hundred acres.

LUTE: And you would like to have about six hundred more, I suppose?

CRETE: That would suit me very well.

LUTE: What sort of men do you expect

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your boys to make, when during their youthful days they do work suited to the strength of big, stout men?

CRETE: My boys never complain.

LUTE: Perhaps not now; but wait a few years. Complaining will be about all they will have any tact for. Heed my warning, and beware; if you wish your boys to be men of any value when grown, you should not expect them to fill the places of men when they are boys.

CRETE: Do you reside in these parts?

LUTE: No, sir. I am just looking around.

CRETE: What is your name?

LUTE: I will tell you my name the next time I come. Good night, sir. (*Exit* UNCLE LUTE.)

(CRETE *stands looking at him, and picks up corn. Enter* MR. LYNN, *hotel landlord; steps to one side and calls as if talking to some person upstairs.*)

LYNN: Did you hear the breakfast call?

VICTOR KINROSS (*upstairs*): Yes, sir.

LYNN: Did you hear the dinner call?

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VICTOR: Yes, sir.

LYNN: Did you hear the supper call?

VICTOR: Yes, sir.

LYNN: Why didn't you get up, then?

VICTOR: I have the best reason in this world for not getting up; I haven't any pants to put on.

LYNN: How is that, sir?

VICTOR: I don't know how that is, sir.

LYNN: Didn't you wear your pants to bed?

VICTOR: No, sir. I haven't worn my pants to bed since I was ten years old.

LYNN: I'll have you arrested, sir.

VICTOR: What name will you have me arrested in?

LYNN: Didn't you register your name last night?

VICTOR: No, sir.

LYNN: Why didn't you?

VICTOR: I didn't see any place to register my name only on the wall. I thought it was about full.

LYNN: Where did you leave your pants last night?

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VICTOR: On a chair at the foot of this bed.

LYNN: Was that window open all night?

VICTOR: Yes, sir.

LYNN: Did you lose your pocketbook, too?

VICTOR: No, sir.

LYNN: Well, what is to be done; do you want some person to get you a pair of pants?

VICTOR: Yes, sir.

LYNN: Have you the money to pay for a pair of pants?

VICTOR: Yes, sir.

LYNN: Let's have it, then.

VICTOR: It's a good paymaster that pays when the work is done. Bring on the pants, and your money is ready.

LYNN: Why didn't you say so long ago, and save all this racket?

VICTOR: You made the racket yourself, sir.

LYNN: None of your impudence, or you will not get any pants.

VICTOR: All right, just as you can afford. I have a few dollars left, and am tired of traveling; if you prefer boarding me in bed, I am your boarder, sir.

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LYNN: What number of pants do you wear?

VICTOR: I do not know.

LYNN: You must be a numskull.

VICTOR: Not at all, sir.

LYNN: Have you any idea about the number?

VICTOR: No, sir; they never put any number on them. I have them made to order.

LYNN: You do not wish to lie in bed while the tailor makes them, do you?

VICTOR: Yes, sir.

LYNN: The tailor is out of town.

VICTOR: All right, I am your boarder then.

LYNN: Where are you going?

VICTOR: To see my mother.

LYNN: Where is your mother?

VICTOR: I do not know; she went away and never returned.

LYNN: She and your father separated?

VICTOR: Yes, sir.

LYNN: Are they divorced?

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VICTOR: No, sir.

LYNN: Is your mother dead?

VICTOR: Yes, sir, and I wish I were dead, too.

LYNN: Why do you wish that?

VICTOR: Then I would not need to wear pants.

LYNN: If I knew how to take your measure as tailors do, I could order you a pair of pants.

VICTOR: I can give you my order. I always send my height.

LYNN: What is your height?

VICTOR: Eleven feet and twenty-two inches.

LYNN: Is that all?

VICTOR: Yes, sir.

LYNN: Where did you grow?

VICTOR: Running around on a farm, sir.

LYNN (*looking thoughtfully down at the floor talking to himself*): Eleven feet and twenty-two inches.

THIRD SCENE.

Room arranged as a parlor. Table with cover on of royal purple color, embroidered with gold-colored silk. Before curtain rises DELPHENA SNOW, dressed in nice black, braided with white silk braid, white rose in hair and at throat, carrying white fan, seated, with open book in hand as if reading. After curtain rises, HARRY ROGERS enters with box of writing paper and envelopes; sits down by table with face toward audience, leaving space back of him for others to pass, and begins writing.

Have a call bell on table. Enter MACE ROGERS on opposite side and sits down. Dressed in sky-blue silk, trimmed with white silk lace, blue gloves, blue shoes; wearing a very light blue wrap over, having sleeves and collar trimmed with gold-colored fringe, belt or sash to match. Turban to match wrap; light blue face veil.

Enter FAUSTINA LYNN on the same side, dressed in nice black serge, with black silk lace in neck and sleeves, carrying in hand a roll of white paper. (Bows to MISS SNOW. MISS SNOW returns the bow.)

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THIRD SCENE.

Room arranged as a parlor. Table with cover on of royal purple color, embroidered with gold-colored silk. Before curtain rises DELPHENA SNOW, dressed in nice black, braided with white silk braid, white rose in hair and at throat, carrying white fan, seated, with open book in hand as if reading. After curtain rises, HARRY ROGERS enters with box of writing paper and envelopes; sits down by table with face toward audience, leaving space back of him for others to pass, and begins writing.

Have a call bell on table. Enter MACE ROGERS on opposite side and sits down. Dressed in sky-blue silk, trimmed with white silk lace, blue gloves, blue shoes; wearing a very light blue wrap over, having sleeves and collar trimmed with gold-colored fringe, belt or sash to match. Turban to match wrap; light blue face veil.

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Enter FAUSTINA LYNN on the same side, dressed in nice black serge, with black silk lace in neck and sleeves, carrying in hand a roll of white paper. (Bows to MISS SNOW. MISS SNOW returns the bow.)

FAUSTINA (*addressing* MR. ROGERS): Is Mrs. Rogers at home?

MR. ROGERS (*without stopping his work*): Yes'm; go on into the sitting-room; you will find her.

FAUSTINA *passes on and goes out.*

Enter MRS. SERENE, *dressed in brown flannel, brown bonnet, and brown cotton gloves.*

MRS. SERENE (*addressing* MR. ROGERS): Is Mr. Celt tending to business to-day?

MR. ROGERS: Yes'm. (*Rings bell.*)

MR. CELT *enters on opposite side and bows.*

MRS. SERENE: Is your store open to-day?

CELT: Yes'm.

MRS. SERENE: Then I will leave my order.

CELT: I will be glad to take your order.
(*Takes out order book.*)

MRS. SERENE: Have you Souchong?

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CELT: Souchong? Madam, I do not understand what you wish.

MRS. SERENE: You had a new box of Souchong last week.

CELT: I guess it was in some other store you saw it.

MRS. SERENE: No, sir, it was in this store I saw it. That black tea you got last week.

CELT: Oh, yes, we have some very excellent black tea, if that is what you mean.

MRS. SERENE: Yes, that is what I mean.

CELT (*smiling*): How much Souchong do you wish?

MRS. SERENE: Five pounds. Have you sugar sand?

CELT: Yes'm, what colors, and how much of each color do you wish?

MRS. SERENE: I would wish a half pound of every color you have.

MRS. SERENE: Have you medlars?

CELT: I think not.

MRS. SERENE: Have you mazards?

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CELT: Yes'm. How much do you wish?

MRS. SERENE: About ten pounds. Do you keep metheglin?

CELT: No, madam, I am entirely out.

MRS. SERENE: I thought it would do to put pickles into for a gusto. Have you sapsago?

CELT: Yes'm, the best there is in market.

MRS. SERENE: I will take fifty pounds. Have you salmagundi?

CELT: Yes, about a gallon.

MRS. SERENE: That is about what I would wish. Have you straight A sugar?

CELT: Yes'm. How many pounds do you wish?

MRS. SERENE: I would wish one bar'l; and I wish fifty pounds of the best coffee you have.

We have a heap of things to see to now, and I feel anxious to have everything in late style.

CELT: Yes, people usually feel more anxious about having late styles for weddings than any other entertainment.

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MRS. SERENE: Yes, and Felix Stone is so high-toned.

CELT: I am not personally acquainted with him.

MRS. SERENE: Ain't you? I thought everybody knew him. I've already had it throw'd into my face that some folks thought it strange that Felix Stone would come into our family looking for a wife. I'll show them we are just as high-toned as Felix Stone is.

CELT: Ah, this world is too much for style.

MRS. SERENE: Could you tell me where we could get a factotum?

CELT (*slowly*): Yes, I could, but she is rather high on the charge.

MRS. SERENE: I don't care for charges.

CELT: You don't? Well, two blocks east, and one block north, you will find good help.

Enter her son FACULTY, aged about fourteen, dressed in dark blue suit, with cap in hand, addressing his mother.

FACULTY: Say, mam, I think you're a long time getting your shopping done.

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MRS. SERENE: Ah, Faculty, you are always in a hurry.

FACULTY: Well, you'll get in a bigger hurry than this when you get to buying my wedding fixings.

MRS. SERENE (*addressing* CELT): Have you Florence silk?

CELT: Yes'm.

MRS. SERENE: Cut off twenty yards for me. Have you Surah silk?

CELT: Yes'm, we have a very fine piece of Surah.

MRS. SERENE: I believe that will make a very nice banion. I will take fifteen yards. Now I wish some kind of goods to make a domino.

CELT: I do not know what kind of goods you wish.

MRS. SERENE: Have you Levantine?

CELT: We have a beautiful piece of Levantine.

MRS. SERENE: That will be just the thing to make my daughter a domino for fall. I

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am so happy to know I found some Levantine.
Have you late styles of vandykes?

CELT: We have the very latest in vandykes.

MRS. SERENE: I will take four. Have you
pilchards?

CELT: No, madam; you will be more apt
to find pilchards at a fish store.

MRS. SERENE: Do you keep shamrock?

CELT: No, madam, that doesn't come in
our line of business.

FACULTY: Have you any candy?

CELT: No, sir.

FACULTY: I feel as if I could eat a flour
sack full.

MRS. SERENE: Have you black Regatta
silk?

CELT: Yes'm; how many yards do you
wish?

MRS. SERENE: Twenty yards. I think
that will be enough to make me a dress. Have
you moreen?

CELT: No, madam.

MRS. SERENE: Have you sarcenet?

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CELT: Yes'm; what color do you wish?

MRS. SERENE: I wish a mazarine color; five yards will be enough.

CELT: Is there anything more you wish?

MRS. SERENE: Nothing more. I've nothing smaller than doubloons to pay you.

CELT (*smiling*): Send them over; I can change doubloons.

MRS. SERENE: It takes a heap more fussing now than it did when me and Joseph got married.

CELT: I suppose it does.

MRS. SERENE: Now, Faculty, we are ready to go home.

FACULTY: I don't see any fun trotting round after you. I'm getting tired and weak in my knees, for want of something to chew.

MRS. SERENE: This boy is very malapert to-day.

Exit MRS. SERENE and FACULTY; *exit* MR. CELT (*smiling*). *Enter* AUNT LUCY, *dressed as at first*.

AUNT LUCY: Really, Delphena, you are always reading.

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DELPHENA (*smiling*): I believe I do read the greater part of the time.

AUNT LUCY (*addressing* MR. ROGERS): Is Mrs. Rogers at home?

ROGERS: Yes'm, you will find her in the sitting room.

AUNT LUCY *passes on and out*. (*Enter* MRS. SERENE, *smiling*; *addresses* ROGERS): Is Mr. Celt busy?

ROGERS: I think not. (*Rings the bell.* CELT *enters*.)

MRS. SERENE: I forgot the most important article. I wish to buy something for a present for a gentleman. Have you sold that beautiful chibouque?

CELT: No, madam; we have had it in the store seven years, and have not been able to find a buyer for it, because it was so high-priced.

MRS. SERENE: Never mind the price; I will take it anyhow. What is your price for that chibouque?

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CELT: Seven dollars. (*Takes out his order book.*)

FACULTY *enters and slyly pins a white feather on his mother's sleeve.*

MRS. SERENE: That's cheap enough for wedding times. I'll send for it in the morning.

FACULTY: Have you got any chawing gum? If you have I'll take a dollar's worth.

MRS. SERENE: I wish to buy an escritoire.

CELT: I do not know what you mean. I don't think we have any, anyhow.

MRS. SERENE: Yes, you have got three in the back part of your store—they writing desks.

CELT (*smiling*): Is that what you mean? Well, all right. Send the money and you shall have the escritoire.

MRS. SERENE: It costs a heap of money to get married now, and be first cut.

CELT: It seems to be costing you something.

FACULTY: I hope you'll get some chawing gum by the time I come again.

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MRS. SERENE: Faculty, we must be going.

Exit MRS. SERENE and FACULTY, as he smiles upon the audience and points to his mother's sleeve.

Exit MR. CELT (smiling).

Enter MRS. CELT (dressed in nice black; addresses ROGERS): Is Mrs. Rogers at home?

ROGERS: Yes'm, my wife is always at home. Go into the sitting room; you will find her.

MRS. CELT *passes on and out.*

CECIL PAGE *enters where* MRS. CELT *went out; addresses* MR. ROGERS.

CECIL: Mr. Rogers, three ladies have called inquiring for Mrs. Rogers.

ROGERS: Send them to her room. (*Keeps writing.*)

CECIL: But Mrs. Rogers is not here.

ROGERS: Certainly she is here.

CECIL: No, Mr. Rogers, your wife has not been here for ten days.

ROGERS: Why, Cecil, she was here at breakfast time. I surely know my wife's

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dresses. I saw her as she passed out of the dining room this morning.

CECIL: That was not Mrs. Rogers. That woman does the overseeing of the work, and wears Mrs. Rogers' dresses.

MR. ROGERS (*turning toward CECIL, a little angry*): Cecil, do you wish to lose your job?

CECIL: No, sir.

ROGERS: Then do not be putting up a story like that upon me. (*Exit CECIL.*)

Enter MRS. CELT (*addressing ROGERS*): Really, Mr. Rogers, I believe Mrs. Rogers is not at home.

MR. ROGERS (*throwing down his pencil, says*): I can find her.

MRS. ROGERS (*instantly*): I am Mrs. Rogers. (*Takes off her wrap and hat.*)

MR. ROGERS (*greatly surprised*): Mace, how is this? What sort of a trick is this to play upon me when I work so hard to support our family?

MRS. ROGERS: Did not I tell you, Harry, that I could go away from home for ten days

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and you would not miss me if you saw my old dresses flying around as usual?

ROGERS (*smiling*): Well, yes, I do remember you made that remark once, but I never thought of you trying it in this manner.

MRS. ROGERS: Who was it said "Never forget to court your wife"?

MR. ROGERS: Really, Mace, I think I did courting enough before we were married to last the remainder of our lifetime.

MRS. ROGERS: Everything is business, business, business; you are buried in your work.

ROGERS (*looking at her in beseeching manner*): Is that the trouble, Mace?

MRS. ROGERS: Truly, that is all I have to complain of.

MR. ROGERS (*smiling*): Well, well, come in, we will have one good, square meal together.

(*Exit MRS. ROGERS, then MR. ROGERS.*)

Enter AUNT LUCY, from opposite side, with CERES BRANSON accompanying her; dressed in

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gray, braided with black; carrying white fan, pink buds in hair at throat.

AUNT LUCY (*addressing Miss SNOW*): I suppose, Delphena, you remember Ceres Branson?

DELPHENA (*smiling, rises and shakes hands*): Most assuredly I do. (AUNT LUCY *offers a chair, and goes out.*)

DELPHENA: I am a stranger here and am glad you came in.

CERES: I hope you will remain some time, as I am not very much acquainted myself.

DELPHENA: Why, how is that? You have been teaching here for years.

CERES: My time is nearly all employed in the school-room. I have several classes to care for evenings.

AUNT LUCY and CECIL *bring in a luncheon of cold tongue and cake, with napkins and tea-plates to serve it upon. Silver knives and forks passed upon a silver or china tray.*

AUNT LUCY: If you have light refreshments, you will have more strength to visit with each other.

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CECIL *brings a pitcher of water and five water glasses and leaves them upon the table.* MRS. SERENE *enters just as they have finished passing the lunch.*

MRS. SERENE (*addressing AUNT LUCY*): I was out calling, and thought I would come in and visit a while with you. I wonder if I made a mistake?

AUNT LUCY (*offering her a chair*): No mistake at all; be seated.

Enter FACULTY (smiling): I am your escort, Sister Serene.

MRS. SERENE: Faculty, I will be obleeged to give you some training when I get home; I didn't know you was coming.

AUNT LUCY *offers him a chair*; CECIL *brings in two plates and napkins.*

AUNT LUCY (*to MRS. SERENE and FACULTY*): As we are having a luncheon, you might as well share it with us. (*Addressing MRS. SERENE.*) Will you have a bit of the tongue?

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MRS. SERENE: Goodness, no; I've more tongue now than I know how to manage.

AUNT LUCY: Perhaps your son would like a piece?

FACULTY: If you please. I am just in need of a little more tongue. (*CECIL passes the cake.*)

DELPHENA: This tongue is very nice.

MRS. SERENE: This cake is just splendid. I would like to know how many eggs it takes to make such a cake as this?

AUNT LUCY: If I remember correctly it takes twelve eggs.

FACULTY: Now, ma, when you go home, you will rob all the old setting hens of their eggs, to make a cake like this, because it is super excellent.

(*CECIL passes the cake; FACULTY takes two pieces.*)

MRS. SERENE: Dudes never have any manners.

FACULTY: No, nor the mothers of dudes; that is what ails the dude.

CERES: Is your son inclined to be a dude?

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MRS. SERENE: I think he is inclined to climb that way. (CECIL *passes the water; all take water except FACULTY, who says*): No, thank you; I always drink milk. (*Drinks it all at once.*)

CECIL: Would you like another glass of milk?

FACULTY: The same glass will do, but I would like it filled again.

(CECIL *fills it again, and FACULTY drinks it all again.*)

FACULTY: I'll tell you what's a fact, Sister Serene; this milk is so good, I believe I could drink a cow full.

MRS. SERENE: Hush, Faculty.

DELPHENA: I thought dudes were usually very dainty.

FACULTY: They have to be dainty to get their shape right. (CECIL *takes all dishes out except the pitcher of water, and one glass, to be left on the table.*)

AUNT LUCY: When you have all chatted and rested I think it would be agreeable to have

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some singing; I would enjoy hearing Ceres sing that beautiful solo she used to sing.

DELPHENA: That would suit me.

FACULTY: When she gets through, I motion Sister Serene sing her duet she's been practising on nigh onto two weeks.

DELPHENA: What is the name of it?

FACULTY: She calls it the "pilgrim's hope." I guess she found it somewhere among Mother Goose's melodies. She sings it in her sleep and out of it.

MRS. SERENE: Now, Faculty.

DELPHENA (*addressing* MRS. SERENE): How did you like the sermon Sunday evening?

MRS. SERENE: Well, some parts of it I liked, and some parts I didn't. At one time he said Martin Luther was a lion; I never read that in the Bible.

DELPHENA: I understood him to say Martin Luther was a lion of truth.

MRS. SERENE: I didn't hear that part. I sometimes think my hearing is failing me.

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FACULTY: Her hearing is failing her, but her speaking apparatus is always in order; good-by, Sister Serene; I believe I'll go home. (*Exit.*)

Enter MRS. BERNE, *dressed in nice black; bows to all in general; (addresses DELPHENA and CERES):* It seems like old times to see you two once more.

CERES: I guess we are equally glad to meet.

MRS. BERNE (*addressing* AUNT LUCY): I suppose you have all heard about Felix Stone being robbed?

AUNT LUCY: No, that is news.

MRS. SERENE: Ah, that is all stuff about him being robbed. I've known peddlers to tell worse yarns than that and pass in good society as if they was somebody. This whole county couldn't see any sunshine unless Felix Stone come around about every so often with that peddling wagon.

MRS. BERNE: I am aware he is like a ray of sunshine wherever he goes.

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MRS. SERENE: He's been talking sweet words to my Hulda more than I care about.

MRS. BERNE: Do you not feel alarmed for fear that Yankee peddler will carry off your daughter?

MRS. SERENE: Sometimes I do. I would rather she would stay with me. She can lift a bushel of wheat as easy as I can.

DELPHENA (*smiling*): What an idea.

MRS. BERNE (*addressing DELPHENA*): Are you still following your old profession?

DELPHENA: I am, when any suits offer.

MRS. SERENE: I should think that suit would last her lifetime.

MRS. BERNE (*addressing CERES*): Delphena has come to decide our law suits.

MRS. SERENE: Ah, that is it; she's got into a law suit, and come out here to get away from it.

MRS. BERNE: No, that is not what I meant; she is a lawyer by profession; pleading law is her business. (*Exit.*)

MRS. SERENE (*confused*): I beg your pas-

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time. I'm tired to-day and that makes me forgetful.

AUNT LUCY: And Ceres will teach our schools for us.

CERES: I will if I am fortunate enough to get them. (*Exit* AUNT LUCY.)

MRS. SERENE: My Hulda wants one school for next winter. I am going to have a dinner party, and left Hulda to tend to the roasting of the turkey, and have it a golden brown when finished.

DELPHENA: Dinner parties these days are quite a care to those who have them in charge.

Enter FLORIDA (*about eighteen*): Ma, shall I make those white-top pies and have them nice and cool for dinner?

MRS. SERENE: Yes, and flavor them with vernilly.

FLORIDA: All right. (*Exit.*)

Enter FACULTY (*smiling*): Vernilly it shall be then. I expect this dinner will be just boss. Sister Serene will give us one of her model dinners. How many tablecloths are

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you going to put on this time? All you have, I suppose.

MRS. SERENE: Oh, no, son, if I should they would reach to the ceiling. Now, Faculty, I want you should dress up and help entertain the company.

FACULTY: I should think you would; I am such a help to you. Well, what do you want me to do? Introduce the ladies?

MRS. SERENE: Yes, and then you can carve the turkey; that will help the girls, and give them time to have the table in order. It will help your father, too; he is always so bashful when there is any ladies around.

DELPHENA: Are you going to have a large party?

MRS. SERENE: Oh, no, just what can gather round the dining table comfortably. Hulda and me have been making the greatest of preparations.

FACULTY: I should think you had; women go to so much fuss at such times. Every woman acts as if she was trying to outdo the other.

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I just feel as if I would like to slap every one of them.

MRS. SERENE: You wouldn't slap your mother, would you?

FACULTY: She needs slapping the worst of any of them; don't you think so?

MRS. SERENE: My, no.

FACULTY: Why, yes, I've seen you go to more fuss for a preachers' dinner than I would for a wedding dinner for a pair of twin girls.

FLORIDA (*addressing* FACULTY): Faculty, do you know anything about those eggs that were in the market basket?

FACULTY (*smiling*): Yes'm, I know all about them; do you want them?

FLORIDA: Yes, I want them now in a hurry; did you hide them?

FACULTY: I guess I did.

FLORIDA: Tell me where you hid them.

FACULTY (*smiling*): You could not get them if I should tell you.

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FLORIDA: Well, you tell me, and I'll show you if I don't find them.

FACULTY: What do you want to do with them?

FLORIDA: I want to make some pies for dinner.

FACULTY: Some white-top pies, I suppose?

FLORIDA: Yes.

FACULTY: Well, I guess you will have to do without them this time.

FLORIDA: I guess we won't; tell me quick where they are, for I'm in a hurry.

MRS. SERENE: Faculty, if you have hid them eggs, I want you should git them fur her immejetly.

FACULTY: 'Ah, Sister Serene, when you speak I always obey when I can, but in this case I cannot.

MRS. SERENE: None of your nonsense; go and git them eggs fur Florida.

FACULTY: I cannot.

MRS. SERENE: Yes, you can. Tell me where you put them, and I will get them.

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FACULTY: You are sure about that, are you?

MRS. SERENE: Yes, sir; now let's know quick.

FACULTY: Madam, I got outside of them.

FLORIDA: What! you didn't go and suck those eggs, did you?

FACULTY: I didn't suck them; I just swallowed them right down.

FLORIDA: Why, there were fourteen of them.

FACULTY: I am aware of that.

FLORIDA: And you swallowed every one of them?

FACULTY: For a fact I did.

FLORIDA: Now, ma, you ought to punish him for that trick.

FACULTY: Now, Sister Serene, go and get those eggs if you wish to.

FLORIDA: Yes, you know ma wouldn't punish you if you swallowed everything in the house.

FACULTY: If I should take a taste of half

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the cooked victuals in that house I should not want any of that roast turkey.

FLORIDA: You will not get any roast turkey. (*Exit.*)

MRS. SERENE: Faculty, you ought not sucked them eggs.

FACULTY (*smiling*): Madam Serene, you are to blame yourself for me doing that. I would never thought of swallowing those eggs if you folks didn't go to so much unnecessary work for these dinner parties.

MRS. SERENE: Well, I guess I'll have to send you to Yurrupe.

FACULTY: Just remember, sis, I might return and make up for lost time.

MRS. SERENE: Faculty, it is time fur you to dress, and be in order when the company comes.

FACULTY: Yes'm, that's so. I do not know what I would do if it were not for Sister Serene to remind me of my duty. (*Exit.*)

DELPHENA: Your son seems to be a very happy disposition.

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MRS. SERENE: Yes, he's always happy. He is so smart I believe I'll send him to Yur-rup to learn to be a dude.

CERES (*smiling*): Really, that is a very strange idea.

DELPHENA: I was not aware that to be a dude was a very paying profession.

MRS. SERENE: Well, I've been thinking about it fur some time. He's no account to help me in my work; he's not stout enough.

CERES: From appearances some person does a wonderful amount of work at your place. I never saw a place improve faster.

MRS. SERENE: It costs a heap to be first cut, and I don't like to be the hind car on any train.

FACULTY (*dressed in red velvet knee pants and a pink calico shirt, smiling*): Sister Serene, you need not expect much for dinner to-day; the cooks are both mad. Hulda is just hopping around there, and Florida is mad, too, because she had to make rhubarb pies.

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MRS. SERENE: Do they want me to help them?

FACULTY: No, there is nothing for you to do. They are extremely angry because I got outside of those eggs. They have enough stuff cooked over there to feed an army, yet the girls think they are not going to have anything for dinner.

MRS. SERENE: You stay here with me, pet.

FACULTY: Yes, I will. (*Exit.*)

CERES: How many children have you?

MRS. SERENE: Only them three, but they're no 'count to me but Hulda. Florida is just like her father, so 'fraid of doing something wrong.

DELPHENA: If your son is as jolly at home as away, you do not have much chance to get sad.

MRS. SERENE: He is always happy and smart.

CERES: Where there is only one boy, he is apt to be a spoiled child.

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MRS. SERENE: It is not that way at our house; he has always been our pet.

FLORIDA (*addressing* MRS. SERENE): Ma, I wish you would come home; we are expecting our company soon, and we cannot make Faculty behave himself. Just as we had the dinner table finished as we thought, we made the discovery of a dish of gooseberry jam upon the table, without a grain of sugar in it. Some of Faculty's work. You come home. (*Exit.*)

DELPHENA: Really, women have many trials preparing dinner parties. I always try to help what I can, but I am poor help at such times.

MRS. SERENE: The heft of the work at such times usually comes on the old folks; my Hulda knows how to manage a high-toned dinner party just as well as I do.

FACULTY (*fanning himself with a palm-leaf fan*): I feel lots better in these short pants than I did with them pantalets dangling around my feet. Sister Serene, I think it's about time you was going home. There's a whole

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slew of women coming; I suppose they are coming to that dinner party. I made my escape, for fear I might get gobbled by them or the cooks.

MRS. SERENE: Come here, Faculty; I want to talk to you.

FACULTY: Yes, I will. *(Keeps walking and fanning.)*

MRS. SERENE: What did you make that gooseberry jam without sugar for?

FACULTY: Well, madam, you are always saying, "Now, let's have something tart with turkey:" so I thought I would prepare you a gooseberry relish without sugar. Will it be tart enough, think ye?

MRS. SERENE *(smiling)*: I guess so.

CERES: You are quite a help about dinner parties.

FACULTY: Indeed I am.

MRS. SERENE: You shouldn't pester the girls so. Has Felix Stone come yet?

FACULTY: No, how is it? Is this to be a hen or a goose party?

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MRS. SERENE: Neither; it's a ladies' party.

FACULTY: So you thought Felix Stone would be there, did you? Maybe he is coming; I thought I saw Hulda smile once.

DELPHENA: You are your mother's merry-making child, I believe.

FACULTY: For a fact I am.

CERES: You are going to have a high-toned party, I believe.

MRS. SERENE: I always have high-toned parties.

FACULTY: I should think you did. Some of them have been high-toned enough to nearly reach the sky. (*Exit.*)

DELPHENA: You are fortunate to have daughters that can take full charge of affairs in time of giving a dinner party.

MRS. SERENE: My Hulda knows how to take full charge. I can trust her any place, no matter about weather or darkness.

FLORIDA: Ma, why don't you come home?

MRS. SERENE: I'm tired, and want to rest.

FLORIDA: Faculty is passing the turkey

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around on a great big platter ; he gives each one the carving knife, and tells them to cut off a piece to suit themselves. Don't you suppose Hulda and I suffer? Why don't you come home?

MRS. SERENE: I am doing some planning fur a Thanksgiving dinner.

FLORIDA: I think we had better get through with this dinner first. (*Exit.*)

AUNT LUCY (*addressing DELPHENA and CERES*): Would you both enjoy a drive in the country?

DELPHENA: Most assuredly I would.

CERES (*smiling*): Certainly.

LUCY: The carriage is waiting for you.

(*Exit, DELPHENA, CERES and LUCY.*)

Enter FELIX STONE (*smiling*): Well, old lady, I've found you at last. I have been looking three hours for you.

MRS. SERENE: Felix Stone, I wish I had never known you.

FELIX: It is very likely you have not lost

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any more by knowing me than I have by knowing you.

MRS. SERENE: Have you seen my Hulda to-day? She was to have been home yesterday.

FELIX (*smiling*): The last I saw of your Hulda was this morning. An officer was escorting her to the court-house. She was arrested for shoplifting.

MRS. SERENE: I don't believe any such stuff. Peddlers will say anything.

FELIX (*smiling*): Mrs. Serene, I think the first purchase I make will be a guillotine, and place it just above that vandyke of yours.

MRS. SERENE (*soberly*): You git out of this house.

FELIX: Yes, madam, I will, but I wish to thank you before I go for that chibouque you gave me. I shall prize it very highly; and when I am about choked with the smoke from it, I will remember, with tears in my eyes, the three-hundred-pound Amazon who gave it to me.

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MRS. SERENE: You git out of this house, sir.

FELIX (*smiling*): I will, madam; before going I wish to leave my parting blessing with you, and that is this: that hereafter you will remember there will not be very healthy picking for you around the dry goods wagon of this Yankee peddler. (*Exit.*)

MRS. SERENE (*sneeringly*): Ha!

Enter MR. MISSION (*minister*) *wearing the usual clerical suit.* *Bows.* Excuse me, Mrs. Serene, it becomes my painful duty to call you to an account. The course of life you have been following of late has caused great sorrow in our church. As a church we do mean to do what is right. Search the Scriptures; do as they command you, and you will not be coveting and taking what does not belong to you.

MRS. SERENE: I have been searching the Scriptures, and there is where I learned that to be anybody in this world I should have some of this world's goods.

MISSION: Mrs. Serene, this is a serious

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matter, and you are expected to speak the truth.

MRS. SERENE: All right; send on your questions.

MISSION: Have you been taking goods from merchants in the city without paying for them?

MRS. SERENE: Yes, sir.

MISSION: For any great length of time?

MRS. SERENE: Yes, sir, ever since I joined this church.

MISSION: Why, madam, that would be for years.

MRS. SERENE: Yes, sir, I know it would.

MISSION: Do you not know the church does not allow its members to do such deeds?

MRS. SERENE: No, sir; I thought that was what the church was for—to give its members a chance to make money.

MISSION: I am surprised to hear such words. The church has no objections to its members making money, but wishes them to make it in an honest and honorable manner.

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MRS. SERENE: You know mighty well some of them do not make their money honestly. I could p'int out some of them if I wished to.

MISSION: The failures of others will not save you. I am pained to ask you such questions, but it becomes my solemn duty. Did you have anything to do with the taking of the goods from Felix Stone's wagon when he was robbed?

MRS. SERENE: Yes, sir.

MISSION: Did any person or persons help you?

MRS. SERENE: No, sir.

MISSION: What did you do with the goods?

MRS. SERENE: That is my business; not yours, sir.

MISSION: I am shocked to hear you talk in such a manner. I am told it is firmly believed that you have at times taken grains from your neighbors' granaries. Is that so?

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MRS. SERENE: Yes, sir. I have taken a heap of stuff from my neighbors.

MISSION: What caused you to make up your mind to do such deeds?

MRS. SERENE: Well, you believe the Bible to be true, do you not?

MISSION: I assuredly do.

MRS. SERENE: Well, it says, "For unto every one that hath shall be given and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath." Now, you all know I haven't got any learning, like some people have. I look upon that saying this way—that to make them words true, some person has to take some other person's property for their own, and thought I might just as well have it as anybody. In that Book I read, "The poor is hated even of his own neighbor, but the rich hath many friends." In another place I read, "The crown of the wise is their riches." In another place I read, "Every wise woman buildeth her house," and "in all labor there is profit." I noticed that

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people in churches made money faster than them outside; and I made up my mind the quickest way for me to get rich was to join the church and go to stealing with all my might.

MISSION: I am shocked, and greatly grieved to hear such words from your lips.

MRS. SERENE (*smiling*): Well, now, you know our house was small, and nothing nice in it; everybody but us was buying nice furniture, and fixing up in general; and I don't like to be the last end of society.

MISSION: Ah, my dear woman, "better is a little with righteousness than great revenue without right." And remember, "the eyes of the Lord are in every place beholding the evil with the good."

MRS. SERENE: Yes, but look at this: "Hezekiah had exceeding much riches and honor." Now it's very likely, if he hadn't the riches, he wouldn't had the honor.

MISSION: Hezekiah was a good man and the Lord prospered him.

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MRS. SERENE: You think because the Lord prospers me I am not good, though? That Book says: "Salt is good, have salt in yourselves and have peace one with another." Now I have all the salt I could get, and I've tried to have peace with everybody. It also says, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God." Now you all know I have always been a peacemaker in this church, and in this neighborhood.

MISSION: Yes, Mrs. Serene, I remember you have acted the part of peacemaker several times.

MRS. SERENE: I was a peacemaker in three squabbles you all got into in this church.

MISSION: I am aware of that, but remember that good Book says, "Ye shall know them by their fruits."

MRS. SERENE: If that is what you are going by, you are at liberty to examine my fruits any day, sir; and you'll find I've got some mighty good kinds, and a mighty good supply, too.

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MISSION: Perhaps that is not as we are to understand that passage of Scripture.

MRS. SERENE: I understand what fruit means just as well as you do.

MISSION: Excuse me; there is another charge brought against you, and that is drunkenness. I am told you were found by the roadside in a condition that is called dead drunk.

MRS. SERENE: You have a mighty sight of brass to ever bring that up; you gave me the first wine I ever tasted.

MISSION: I am not aware I ever gave you any wine to hurt you.

MRS. SERENE: I could mighty easy jog your memory about it. After I had been doing some heavy night work, carrying other peoples' grains into my own bin, I went downtown one afternoon. I met you on my way home; you inquired about my health; I told you I did not feel well. You took a bottle of wine from your pocket, offered it to me and said these words: "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and

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thine often infirmities." I dranked of it, and did not feel stronger after drinking it, nuther. The woman did not tempt that time. I got home, but never could tell how I got there.

MISSION: We as a church wish to do what is right, and wish you to do what is right, too.

MRS. SERENE: I do many things that is right. At one time a lady lost a very nice pair of gloves in the church; I found them and hung them on the chandelier, that the owner might find them; and they hung there a week before the owner found them. At another time I found a very nice scarf that some lady lost in the church; I hung it on the chandelier that the owner might find it. During this time you picked up a very nice white silk neck scarf, that some person lost in the church; and I said "Hang it on the chandelier alongside of the gloves, that the owner may find it." You looked at it as if you thought it was mighty handsome; finally, you said that would be nice for Sabrina to wear; and you folded it, put it into your pocket and went home; but if you

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hear of me doing any such tricks, you are ready to turn me out of the church.

MISSION: If any person had inquired for a lost neck scarf I am sure I would have brought it to them.

MRS. SERENE: I don't know whether you would or not. My opinion is, preachers will bear as much watching as anybody.

MISSION: Mrs. Serene, "The love of money is the root of all evil."

MRS. SERENE: The Lord said, "But that which ye have already hold fast till I come," and that's just what I've been trying to do.

MISSION: Yes, but you don't want to get quite such a strong hold on your neighbors' wheat as you have been doing of late.

MRS. SERENE: The Bible says, "The Lord hath made all things for Himself." Now as I understand that, what I have been gathering in is the Lord's, if I was gathering in for myself. And He says, "His children shall have a place of refuge."

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MISSION: That Bible says, "The house of the wicked shall be overthrown."

MRS. SERENE: You just look at Samson; how he flourished. What would you think of me to do such a trick as he did—when he ketched three hundred foxes, tied their tails together, put fire brands amongst them, set fire to them, and turned them loose in the Philistines' corn field, and burned up both the shocks and also the standing corn, with the vineyards and olives. He judged Israel twenty years in the days of the Philistines. Now if I should do such a thing as that, you would not think of giving me an office. No, sir, you would not sleep a wink until you had me locked up in some prison house.

MISSION: Samson was a man that God saw fit to perform some wonderful deeds through. Every person must answer for his or her deeds.

MRS. SERENE: I expect to answer for my deeds.

MISSION: If you persist in doing the re-

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mainder of your days as you have been doing of late, what do you expect your fate will be?

MRS. SERENE: I expect to be saved, sir.

MISSION: How so, madam? Does not that Good Book say "For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father, with His angels, and then He shall reward every man according to his works"?

MRS. SERENE: Yes, sir, but that don't say anything about the women. That Book says, "Whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal life." I believe in a Saviour.

MISSION: You have not been keeping His commandments very well of late. He says, "In the last days perilous times shall come."

MRS. SERENE: I am aware of that, sir. He also says, "And the Lord shall deliver me from my evil work and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom."

MISSION: I am truly sorry you persist in following such a course of life. You have no

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right to property belonging to others unless you pay them for it.

MRS. SERENE: What right had you to demand four chickens and a turkey of Deacon Smith for the elder without paying him for them? You know they are very poor people.

MISSION: I know they are, but they had the elder's preaching in return for them.

MRS. SERENE: No, sir. Mrs. Smith and her children did not hear one word of his sermons.

MISSION: The sermons were prepared for every person; if they did not hear them it was their own fault.

MRS. SERENE: Not in this case. Mrs. Smith and her children had no shoes to wear.

MISSION: Mrs. Serene, if you persist in doing such deeds, it will become my painful duty to turn you out of our church.

MRS. SERENE: Well, now you just try turning me out of your church, and I'll make your old head smoke equal to Mount Vesuvius.

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MISSION (*looking sad*): A haughty spirit before a downfall. (*Exit.*)

MRS. SERENE: Now I am alone again, and I wish I could be alone among the mountains the rest of my days. (*Exit.*)

Enter BERNE, *dressed in a common business suit. Pours out a glass of water. Enter* UNCLE LUTE, *wearing a long black robe, long gray hair and whiskers, ancient hat, carrying a cane with gold head.*

LUTE: Can a tired traveler get a chance to rest a short time?

BERNE: Certainly; be seated. (*Offers a chair.*)

Enter ARCHIE, *about ten years old, in a hurry; addresses* BERNE: Say, pa, that preacher didn't kill you, after all, did he?

BERNE (*surprised*): Kill me! why, Archie, I do not understand what you mean.

ARCHIE: When I looked into the sitting room window, that preacher had you on one side of him, bent over a chair, and ma on the other side of him, bent over a chair, and *he* was

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bent over another chair, and I just thought from the way he shook his hands, and tossed his head, he was going to kill you and ma.

BERNE: Why, Archie, what an idea. We were having family prayer.

ARCHIE (*looking earnestly at BERNE*): Well, now you've got me; I don't know what family prayer is. (*Exit ARCHIE.*)

UNCLE LUTE (*eyeing BERNE sharply*): Berne, is that what you call having family prayer—the minister, your wife and yourself doing the praying while your children are out at work?

BERNE: Who are you that you address me in this familiar manner?

LUTE: I am your Uncle Lute.

BERNE: Far from it, sir. You look more like an old tramp than like my Uncle Lute.

LUTE: Time makes its changes.

BERNE: I am aware of that, but time could not change my Uncle Lute into such a frightful-looking creature as you represent.

LUTE: Are you sure about that?

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BERNE: Are you traveling?

LUTE: Yes, sir. I have some nephews living in these parts, and thought I would call around and see how they were getting along.

BERNE: I suppose you found them all getting rich, as the people in these parts are all money-makers.

LUTE: Getting rich? I should think somebody must be getting rich. There is a wonderful amount of improvements being made in the last few years. Have good crops every year, do you not?

BERNE: Yes, very good. This whole county is splendid good land, and yields good crops every year.

LUTE: I should think from the improvements the land must turn out money equal to a gold mine. Prince and Cedonia have made wonderful improvements.

BERNE (*eyes him sharply and seems uneasy*): If you are traveling, you had better go on your journey.

LUTE: I will; before going I wish to con-

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vince you that I am your Uncle Lute, by removing this hat, hair, whiskers and duster. (*Removes them; remains standing.*)

BERNE (*surprised, after an instant*): As I live, I believe you are my Uncle Lute.

LUTE (*dressed in nice black*): For a fact I am.

BERNE: What great crime have you committed that you travel in such disguise as this?

LUTE: Not any crime at all, sir.

BERNE: There must be some mystery connected with this hat and duster.

LUTE: There is no mystery connected, but a wonderful amount of misery and heart-felt sorrow connected with it.

BERNE: Is that so? I am truly sorry to hear that.

LUTE: I have traveled through these parts before, and talked with you when wearing my suit of white and black; do you know it?

BERNE: No; is that so? I do remember a man traveling through these parts years ago, dressed as you were when you came in, who

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gave us some rather sharp scoldings about putting too much work upon our children. Are you that person?

LUTE: I am.

MRS. BERNE: How do you do, Uncle Lute?

LUTE (*bowing*): I am glad to see you once more.

MRS. BERNE: Come out to visit these money-makers?

LUTE: I suppose getting rich is what they call it. Really, I cannot see where they have enriched their minds.

BERNE: I suppose you found many things that did not suit you?

LUTE: I suppose I found many things to make my heart ache.

BERNE: I guess you will think some of your relations have not much sense.

LUTE: Ah, now you are coming down to business. You have all put too much work upon your children when they were young, and now look at them; good subjects for doctors. You will all be lucky if out of a whole barnyard

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full of children, you will have one child smart enough to take care of himself and the old folks.

BERNE: Why didn't you come around with your advice years ago? It might have been some help to us.

LUTE: I did. You did not heed it.

BERNE: Well! we all see when it is too late.

LUTE: How did you all learn to raise such stock? This State has not finer stock in it than Cedonia, Prince and you have.

BERNE (*slowly*): Oh, by reading.

LUTE: Then why could you not learn by reading how to raise your children in such manner that they would look well, and be of some value to themselves and to others?

BERNE: Well, really, I do not know, unless because we did not have any person to jog our memory about it.

LUTE: How many children have you?

BERNE: Oh, five or six or seven. I don't know exactly how many we have.

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LUTE: How many daughters have you?

BERNE: Two or three; I forget which.

MRS. BERNE: Why, Berne, be ashamed of yourself; we have but one daughter, that is Hetta. (*Exit.*)

LUTE (*smiling*): Have you a library?

BERNE: Well, no, we haven't. I don't know what we would do with a library; we cannot get time to read the weekly papers.

LUTE: This living upon a farm and having no time to read is just as you plan your work; you should make a certain amount of reading a part of your day's work. People who do not read, get behind the times.

BERNE: Every man and woman is not educated, but should be, I suppose.

LUTE: They can be, if they will. It is a mistaken idea that a person must go to college or remain in ignorance. Buy books and study them.

BERNE: That would be a very good plan, but when a person gets married and settles

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down on a farm it is generally good-by to books.

LUTE: Usually it is that way, but not necessarily. When we were married Jessie was not educated.

BERNE: What!

LUTE: It is a fact. I never thought what a mortification her ignorance would be to me in time to come until we were making preparations to visit my mother. Quicker than a flash it came into my mind then. All arrangements were made; what could we do? I shrank from the presence of my mother. We lived upon the farm where we now live. I proposed to Jessie that we postpone our visit for two or three years, that by that time we might have more money to buy silk dresses with. I thought of a plan, but every time I began telling her, something would choke me, and I would run out into the fresh air to get my breath. I was afraid of breaking her heart. Finally I told her if she wanted the good will of my mother she must educate herself. I felt so sorry for

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her, I nearly lost my breath for a minute. I proposed buying some books and she was to try studying them. She said she could not keep house and go to school. It was several days before I could tell her that I could teach her. She said she would rather take instructions from me than from any other person. Then I was happy. A genuine rainy day was our for study. We read and spelled, studied grammar, arithmetic, geography, geology, physiology, philosophy and botany, until we had pleasure beyond description. In a few years I began to think I was the ignorant one. Then we visited my mother, and happy hours we spent together.

BERNE: I am surprised. I supposed she was well educated before you ever saw her.

LUTE: No, sir; that is the way she was educated.

MRS. SERENE: I come in to tell you the sewing society would meet to-morrow afternoon at Mrs. Leon Celt's. It has been several weeks since they met; there has been so many

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entertainments lately, the work of the society has been crowded out. Tell Mrs. Berne to go early, so we can get the garments all finished that is begun.

BERNE: That would be a very good plan, if all others would go early.

MRS. SERENE: I'm not much of a hand at making shirts; I'd rather sew on some of them aprons.

BERNE: Now after you get those aprons finished, don't take them home with you. There are a plenty of poor in this town would be glad to get them.

MRS. SERENE: Thank you, sir; I'm not in the habit of taking society-made clothes home with me.

BERNE (*smiling*): Is that so, for a fact?

MRS. SERENE: Yes, sir.

BERNE: How is Joseph? I have not seen him for a long time.

MRS. SERENE: Joseph is rather under the weather.

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BERNE: What seems to be the matter with him?

MRS. SERENE: He has the sciatica.

LUTE: That is rather a troublesome sickness.

MRS. SERENE: It is rather inconvenient getting around.

BERNE: Can he walk?

MRS. SERENE: Yes; he supports himself by pushing a chair, or he could not walk. I'm going to get him a gold-headed cane the first time I go into the city—that will be a heap handier fur him.

BERNE: Very likely that may cure him.

MRS. SERENE: No, I think not; he's had the sciatica ever sense he was working in the water, clearing away that silt.

Enter MRS. SERENE.

LUTE: It may be some time before he gets entirely well.

MRS. SERENE: Yes, I suppose so.

BERNE: I understand you have sent your son Faculty away to college?

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MRS. SERENE: Oh, no, I would not send a child to one of them graduate colleges. Faculty is traveling.

BERNE: What part of this world is he traveling in?

MRS. SERENE: In Yurruup.

BERNE: How long since he started on his trip?

MRS. SERENE: Six months.

LUTE: I suppose board is quite high over there?

MRS. SERENE: Faculty don't pay no board.

BERNE: How is that?

MRS. SERENE: He went as a dude.

BERNE: I suppose he went in company with others?

MRS. SERENE: No others but his keeper.

BERNE: You hear from him, I suppose?

MRS. SERENE: Oh, yes, we've had a heap of letters frum him sense he went away. The last letter we had was from his keeper.

LUTE: Did he write as though your son were doing well?

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MRS. SERENE: Oh, yes, he wrote that Faculty was a holy terror.

LUTE: Is that so?

MRS. SERENE: I was not surprised to hear that of him. Faculty always showed a good deal of religion about him.

BERNE: How did your son happen to go as a dude?

MRS. SERENE: Well, everything seemed to be shaping that way fur years. This man come along and wanted Faculty to go with him fur a dude. He had his recommend papers with him, so we thought he must be all right; and we said to Faculty, he might go if he wanted to. You know every person would not want such a good chance to pass them, because every person could not learn to be a dude.

LUTE: No, every person would not want to be a dude.

MRS. SERENE: Why, is it dangerous?

LUTE (*smiling*): I do not know that it is dangerous any more than that a person follow-

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ing that business would not be very apt to cultivate a taste for any other business.

MRS. SERENE: I don't want him to follow any other business.

LUTE: Is that so?

BERNE: Was Joseph willing your son should go as a dude?

MRS. SERENE: No, it was some of my work. Joseph said he would rather Faculty would be a Sagamore.

LUTE (*laughing*): Really, I believe I should, were I in his place.

BERNE: Well, Faculty has gone traveling and will see something of this world.

MRS. SERENE: Faculty has went traveling not to see the world, but to let the world see him.

BERNE (*smiling*): Oh, that is it?

MRS. SERENE: Yes, that is it. Joseph wanted him to send a succedaneum, but Faculty did not want to, so he went himself.

LUTE: Do you expect your son to return at some future time?

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MRS. SERENE: Oh, yes; his keeper said he thought he could return him an arch dude, in two or three years.

LUTE: Is that so?

MRS. SERENE: I think he will get through and git his tittle in two years. You all know Faculty is quick to learn anything new.

BERNE: Then your son-in-law will take his place?

MRS. SERENE: No, sir; no person could take the place of that boy in my heart.

BERNE: Is that so? I should have thought Faculty would have waited until after the wedding of his sister.

MRS. SERENE: He is glad to get away from such entertainments. There is too much work about it to suit him.

BERNE: I supposed until yesterday that your daughter was married long ago.

MRS. SERENE: No; they hain't had the invitations struck yet. My, oh, don't it take a heap of fussing to git ready fur a wedding these days?

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LUTE: People are inclined to go to too much parade and expense at such times.

MRS. SERENE: Sometimes I think so. I heerd Mr. Reed telling about getting ready fur his daughter's wedding. He said he was having his horse painted inside and out. I couldn't go to such fuss as that; there would be some expense about such a job.

BERNE (*surprised*): What! You do not mean to say he was having his horse painted inside and out?

MRS. SERENE: Most insured I do.

BERNE: I think you must have misunderstood him.

MRS. SERENE: I must be losing my hearing then, fur that is what I thought he said.

BERNE: He is painting his house inside and out; I think that must have been what he was speaking of, and you did not understand him correctly.

LUTE: It is a very easy matter in this world to be mistaken.

MRS. SERENE: Yes, that is so. Well, I

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must go and help the sewing society about making arrangements. (*Exit.*)

BERNE: Really, Mrs. Serene is a very strange woman.

LUTE: She is indeed a very strange woman.

Enter CEDONIA, a small man, very round shoulders, dressed farmer-like.

CEDONIA: How do you do, Uncle Lute?

LUTE: How do you do, Cedonia? I am truly sorry to see you with that hump on your back.

CEDONIA: I suppose I came honestly by it; hard work made it.

LUTE (*slowly*): Hard work; yes, I should think so. You and Berne have done enough hard work years ago to kill half a dozen men of your strength.

BERNE: I believe you are about right.

LUTE (*addressing CEDONIA*): Well, how is your family in general?

CEDONIA (*slowly*): Oh, about as usual, and that is not very well. The boys all seem to be rheumatic, and wife and I have no health.

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We have about made up our minds that this climate does not agree with us, and that a change of climate might help us.

LUTE: A little less work might help all.

CEDONIA: I suppose so, but we have to keep jogging. The boys told me you was over to see us.

LUTE: Yes.

CEDONIA: Was awful sorry wife and I was away from home. Guess the boys wa'n't very entertaining?

LUTE (*smiling*): Entertaining? Well, I tried to make myself agreeable by relating an anecdote. I heard no responses; finally I looked around and, to my surprise, I saw them stretched out upon chairs and the floor fast asleep. I looked at them and thought to myself, "Poor sufferers!"

CEDONIA: My boys were tired; they are always tired; they have such poor constitutions; they seem to have no endurance about them.

LUTE (*surprised*): What! poor constitu-

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tions? If your boys had not had uncommon good constitutions, they would have been dead long ago. What became of your girls?

CEDONIA: They all died with consumption.

LUTE: I am not surprised at that after standing in the cold mud, barefooted, to milk cows, standing from one to three hours down cellar churning, barefoot.

BERNE: For a fact such work as that is a great mistake.

CEDONIA: Well, we see when it is too late.

LUTE: Did not I warn you years ago of the great danger of putting so much work upon your children?

CEDONIA: Why, no, I don't remember as you did.

LUTE: Did not I come with long gray hair and whiskers flying, thinking you would all heed my warning because of my gray locks?

CEDONIA: I do remember years ago, a man wearing a long black robe, having long gray hair and whiskers, giving us boys a sharp lec-

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ture about putting too much work on our boys, but never learned who he was.

LUTE: Neither did you heed his warning. What are your boys good for, or what business are they adapted to?

CEDONIA: They are not adapted to any business (*laughing*). They are of no account for anything.

LUTE: No; because they are worn out. Doctors might pay you a good price for the whole flock. Try resting, and see if that will help you.

CEDONIA: We would be glad to rest, ~~could~~ we get a chance to. We see when it is too late that we planned too much work.

LUTE: It is a lamentable fact that the majority of farmers do plan too much work.

Enter LORENZO in dark-gray business suit; hair neatly combed, shoes neatly polished, comes in smiling, with newspaper in hand.

LUTE: How do you do, Lorenzo?

LORENZO: How do you do, Uncle Lute?

LUTE: Where is Lucy?

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LORENZO: She is coming in. We thought we heard your voice.

LUCY (*comes in smiling, dressed in black satin*): How do you do, Uncle Lute?

LUTE: How do you do, Lucy? I have just been lecturing the boys for always planning so much work. Lorenzo and Lucy can teach you how to farm, and have time to read and rest. They make their reading and resting a part of their day's work, and that is as it should be. We do not live but one lifetime, and why not enjoy it as we go.

CEDONIA (*smiling*): I guess we all see when it is too late.

LUTE: That is very true. And *I* see when it is too late, that had I come in my usual manner of dressing, you might have heeded my warning.

Enter MRS. SERENE, representing a slender person, dressed in gray, carrying a black fan, wearing black slippers, hair to represent gray, combed to make her look old. Seems uneasy, keeps walking.

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MRS. SERENE: I never was so sick in my life. I do believe I am about to die.

AUNT LUCY (*surprised*): Why, what makes you think that?

MRS. SERENE: I never was so sick sense I was born.

AUNT LUCY: Oh, yes, I think you have been several times.

MRS. SERENE: No, I am sure I never was, and I never had such strange thoughts and feelings, as I've had this livelong day. I am sure I am going to die, and I want to die, too.

LUTE: What are you so anxious to die for?

MRS. SERENE: I want to git out of this world.

BERNE (*smiling*): What are you so anxious to get out of this world for?

MRS. SERENE: Because I can't work as I used to, and what I have done keeps coming up in my mind and pesters me so I cannot rest day or night. I wish I was dead and done with it.

CEDONIA: That seems to me a very strange

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way for a person to talk that has such a fine home as you have.

MRS. SERENE: Oh, goodness! I wish I had never seen this place.

AUNT LUCY: Now do not get so excited; I do not think you are going to die now.

MRS. SERENE: Yes, I be; I know I will; I just feel my heart stop beaten sometimes. I want to die before Faculty gets home.

AUNT LUCY: Why do yqu wish to die before he gets home?

MRS. SERENE: Because I don't want him to see me again. There's lots of things I'll never hear the last of if he gets hold of them.

LORENZO: Ah, what a pity you did not think of such things many years ago.

MRS. SERENE: I did, but I did not care then. I was bound our family should be first cut and they have been, too.

LUTE: They have been first cut at the expense of your strength, have they not?

MRS. SERENE: Most insured they have. Oh, my back feels as if it was all gone. I just

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believe what makes it feel so bad is lifting so many great, big sacks of wheat and oats. Goodness, it's a wonder I didn't drop down dead some of them warm nights with a big sack of something on my shoulders.

BERNE: It is a wonder the overruling power of this world did not strike you with a streak of lightning while you were doing such wrong work.

MRS. SERENE: Now, see here, Mr. Berne, you know by the reading of that Bible if I hadn't took that stuff, somebody else would; and I just think yet, we might just as well have it as anybody. I do hope I will die before Faculty gits home.

CEDONIA: I heard you was very anxious to have him come.

MRS. SERENE: I was until I got sick, and then I didn't want to see him. If there was any way to keep him frum knowing this, but there hain't. I do hope I will die.

BERNE: I think you had better live and try to repent of your wrong doings.

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MRS. SERENE: I have repented long ago; but I want to git out of this.

AUNT LUCY: I think you had better have a doctor.

MRS. SERENE: No, no, I don't want a doctor.

LORENZO: Why are you not willing to have a doctor?

MRS. SERENE: I've stole so much wood frum them, if I should git light-headed while they are here I might tell them about it. No, no, I don't want no doctors.

CEDONIA: They might want the pay for the wood you have taken. (*Smiling.*)

MRS. SERENE: I might pay fur the wood, if I didn't have to pay so much to the church, and so much fur the missionary cause—that furrin' missionary work this church is not able to pay anything toward.

LUTE: You are not obliged to pay to the missionary cause if you do not want to.

MRS. SERENE: In this church a person that does not give about so much every year to the

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missionary cause is not considered anybody at all.

LUTE (*smiling*): Is that so?

MRS. SERENE: Oh, how my head aches.

AUNT LUCY: If you do not want a doctor, we might have some neighbor come in and prescribe for you.

MRS. SERENE: I'll tell you who I would like to see and that is Mrs. Britton.

AUNT LUCY: Mrs. Britton is almost a stranger to you.

MRS. SERENE: I know it; that is why I want to talk with her. I don't feel much like talking to anybody I know.

AUNT LUCY: I should think you would prefer talking with some person you are acquainted with.

MRS. SERENE: No, no, they air just the ones I want to git away frum; oh, I just wish I could die! If I could make money as I used to, I would rather live, but I can't, so I would rather go and be out of this place of torment.

LORENZO: I should think you would feel

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there might be danger of getting into a place of greater torment.

MRS. SERENE: Not a bit of danger. I am mighty sure of that. I never could git into greater torment than I have been in lately. I want to see Mrs. Britton.

BERNE: I suppose I could go over and see if she would come in to see you a while.

MRS. SERENE: You needn't go over to see about it; just tell her to come.

BERNE: Yes, well. (*Smiling.*)

MRS. SERENE: Goodness sakes, how I wish I could die before Faculty gits here.

AUNT LUCY: Perhaps I had better have some of the neighbors come in if you feel that way?

MRS. SERENE: No, I don't want them. I wish I had never had any neighbors.

AUNT LUCY: You do? Such good neighbors as you have. I am surprised to hear you speak of them in that manner.

MRS. SERENE: The neighbors are a mighty sight better than I am. That's why I don't

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want to see them. When I am dead and gone, you will hear them telling a mighty sight of stuff about me. They will be telling how good I always have been, and that I mighty nigh kept up the church expenses, how I helped the poor and all that.

AUNT LUCY: I have always understood you was a great help to the church.

MRS. SERENE: I just want you to know that I took a mighty sight of stuff from the rich that wasn't inclined to do much for the church, and give to the poor. That is the way I kept up the church expenses; and the preachers did know of it fur years. They will tell when I am gone what a help I have been to their church. I just want the newcomers in this church to know how things have been running here fur years. Preachers will bear as much watching as anybody.

BERNE: For a fact I guess they will.
(*Smiling.*)

MRS. SERENE: I have done a heap of stealing in my time. Oh, I wish I was dead.

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LUTE: I should think you would rather live and reform your ways.

MRS. SERENE: Oh, I hain't got no form left. I am built just like a lath now. I've had a heap of trouble the last few weeks thinking over the narrow escapes I made of being ketched in my stealing. I thought it was smart then, but I don't think so now. How I wish I could die.

BERNE: I don't think you are going to die soon; you are quite strong yet.

MRS. SERENE: If I could work as I used to I would like to live two hundred years, but I can't, so I don't care if I don't live two minutes.

LORENZO: I should think you would want to live long enough to see that law suit finished?

MRS. SERENE: I am afraid I will get beat in that law suit. You know there isn't much justice in law, nohow, and I would rather die than get beat. I would never hear the last of it. When I die, I want this verse put upon my

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curb-stone, "The Lord helps them what helps themselves." Sign my name to it.

AUNT LUCY (*smiling*): You want the date of your birth and death, do you not?

MRS. SERENE: No, not one word; only what I told you.

AUNT LUCY: That will look a little odd, will it not?

MRS. SERENE: No matter if it does. I'm an odd woman.

LORENZO: Really, I believe you are.

MRS. SERENE: Well, I must go home; goodness, I wish I could die and be out of my misery!

BERNE: Do not forget about your law suit to-morrow.

MRS. SERENE (*sorrowfully*): Yes, the next thing is that law suit. How I wish I could die, or be alone amongst the mountains; good-by. (*Exit.*)

AUNT LUCY: Mrs. Serene is a remarkably strange woman.

CEDONIA (*smiling*): She has been Satan in

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petticoats a greater part of her lifetime, but it was not known until of late.

LUTE: Had she been educated, and rightly trained in her youth, she might have been a very different person in her older days.

THE END.





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